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RUEHAK/USDAO ANKARA TU PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 002488

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MASS](#) [EAID](#) [IZ](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY/IRAQ: TURKEY PREPARED TO ENGAGE NEW IRAQI
GOVERNMENT

Classified By: Amassador Ross Wilson for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

Summary

¶1. (C) Turkish Iraq Coordinator Oguz Celikkol told Ambassador May 4 that Turkey has invited Iraqi PM al-Maliki to visit, will invite other ministers once named, and is prepared to send FM Gul to Baghdad as well. Turkey is prepared to offer Iraq additional border gates, USD 2 million in military equipment, and additional security training. Debt forgiveness will be harder, however. Turkey is also ready to re-start tripartite talks with Iraq and the U.S. on PKK terrorism. The GOT is enthusiastic about supporting a Baghdad PRT but wants more specifics on what Turkey can provide and security arrangements. The MFA supports providing an aircraft for UNAMI but the military is still considering. Turkey hopes for a resolution to delays in the issuance of ID cards for its personnel in Baghdad and is concerned about specific threats to its embassy and ambassador there. End Summary

Turkey Ready to Help New Government

¶2. (C) Celikkol told Ambassador that Prime Minister Erdogan has invited Iraqi PM al-Maliki to visit Ankara and will also invite the new Iraqi Defense and Interior Ministers once a government is formed. FM Gul is also ready to visit Baghdad once he is medically able to fly and Celikkol anticipates visiting Iraq in the coming weeks to work these and other steps Turkey plans to take in support of the new government. Turkey hopes al-Maliki will make Turkey his first destination once the government is in place, as PM Jafari did last year. Ambassador praised these initiatives, telling Celikkol that a visit by FM Gul to Baghdad, followed by PM Erdogan, would be especially welcome signals of support.

¶3. (C) Celikkol said Turkey is preparing a new package of assistance for Iraq. The GOT will renew its offer to open several new border crossings over time. The MFA is working to provide USD 2 million worth of military equipment needed by Iraqi security forces based on the needs list we had provided earlier. Funding may come from Turkey's existing USD 50 million pledge or from a separate source. Turkey is also prepared to renew its offer of additional training for

Iraqi security forces and is prepared to dedicate an entire training academy for this effort upon a positive Iraqi response. Celikkol's deputy, Fazli Corman, told us May 3 that as soon as security conditions permit, Turkey prefers to train ISF in Iraq. We reminded Corman that Turkey could send trainers to Iraq under NTM-I as part of this effort (Turkey has four people in Iraq under NTM-I, but they are administrative personnel, not trainers).

Debt Forgiveness Harder

¶4. (C) Ambassador urged Celikkol to consider Iraqi debt forgiveness. Celikkol said he would consult the offices dealing with economic matters but averred this would not be easy, proposing debt rescheduling as a more likely alternative. Ambassador explained that debt rescheduling is not in synch with what most other countries have done and will not accomplish one key goal of freeing Iraq from debt so that it can borrow itself in international markets. He urged that Turkey take a harder look at this.

Need More Details on PRT

¶5. (C) Celikkol said Turkey welcomed the U.S. invitation to contribute to a Baghdad PRT; he is consulting the GOT's international aid agency TIKa on what Turkey can provide. He said it would be helpful to have more detail from the U.S. on what Turkey could usefully provide in terms of technical experts as well as projects. He also said Turkey needed more specific information on the security arrangements for its PRT

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personnel. Ambassador encouraged Celikkol to have the Turkish embassy in Baghdad contact our embassy there, and suggested the Turkish embassy in Washington get in touch with S/I at the Department for additional information.

UNAMI Aircraft: Up to TGS

¶6. (C) Celikkol confirmed that the MFA has made a positive recommendation on providing a transport aircraft to UNAMI. (Note. We had heard earlier that the Turkish General Staff had initially responded negatively but had promised to reconsider its position at MFA urging. End note). Celikkol hoped that the possibility of basing the aircraft in Turkey rather than Amman would make the idea more palatable to the TGS. He said he expected an answer in a matter of days.

More Air Connections

¶7. (C) Noting that the private Turkish airline Fly Air was continuing direct flights between Istanbul and Erbil, Celikkol said that Iraqi Air flights on the same route had ceased after a Turkish court ruled in favor of confiscation of Iraqi assets based on Saddam-era debts owed to Turkish firms. He said that a private Iraqi airline named Jupiter planned to begin Baghdad to Istanbul flights in the near future.

Security Issues

¶8. (C) Celikkol hoped that delays in issuing identification cards for new Turkish embassy officials in Baghdad would be resolved soon and asked for our intervention. Ambassador assured him that several foreign missions in Baghdad had similar problems and Embassy Baghdad is seeking to improve

matters.

19. (C) Celikkol reported that personnel involved in the renovation of Turkey's Baghdad embassy had been kidnapped and Turkish embassy blueprints had been stolen. Moreover, Turkish officials had received information on May 3 concerning a specific threat to Ambassador Cevikoz in Baghdad and were reviewing embassy security accordingly. Ambassador urged that the Turkish and U.S. Embassies in Baghdad be in close touch. Celikkol said that work would begin soon on the Turkish consulate in Mosul and Turkey hoped to open it by June.

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WILSON